

## In the Claims

---

1. (currently amended) A method of treating or preventing dental caries, dental plaque, and periodontal infection in a humans or animals comprising administering to the oral cavity of a human or animal one or more lactic bacteria that are not part of the resident microflora of the mouth, that are low acidifying in that when administered they provide a pH in the oral cavity of about 5.5 to 7, and that are capable of adhering directly to the pellicle of the teeth to displace from the teeth or prevent attachment to the teeth of cariogenic strains of bacteria that are resident microflora of the mouth.

2. (cancelled)

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the lactic bacteria are of dairy origin.

33  
4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the lactic bacteria comprise one or more of *Streptococcus thermophilus*, *Lactococcus lactis subsp. lactis*, or *Lactococcus lactis subsp. lactis biovar diacetylactis*.

5. (canceled)

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the lactic bacteria have optimal growth at a temperature of about 37°C.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the lactic bacteria have been genetically modified to have improved adherence to the pellicle of the teeth or to be less acidifying than the resident microflora in the mouth.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the lactic bacteria have been genetically modified to have improved adherence to the pellicle of the teeth by insertion of the X17390 gene, the X14490 gene, or the X53657 gene.

9. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising administering the lactic bacteria in combination with one or more of milk, fermented milk, milk derivatives, or bacteriocin.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the milk derivative comprises one or more of a caseino-glycomacropeptide, micellar casein, fluorinated micellar casein, or renneted milk.

11-22. (cancelled.)

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the lactic bacteria that are used for treating or preventing dental caries are administered by way of a composition that contains the lactic bacteria in an amount of  $10^4$  to  $10^9$  cfu/g in order to provide a the pH of at least 5.5 when the composition is administered to the oral cavity of a human or animal.

24. (original) The method of claim 23, wherein the composition further contains one or more of milk, fermented milk, or a milk derivative.

25. (original) The method of claim 24, which further comprises a bacteriocin in an amount of about 0.00001 to 50 percent by weight of the composition.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the composition includes a milk derivative comprising one or more of a caseino-glycomacropeptide, micellar casein, fluorinated micellar casein, or renneted milk in an amount of at least about 0.1 percent by weight of the composition.

27. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises one or more of an oil soluble antioxidant or an abrasive.

28. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is in the form of a toothpaste, mouth rinse, gum, spray, beverage, candy, infant formula, ice cream, frozen dessert, sweet salad dressing, milk preparation, cheese, quark, yogurt, acidified milk, coffee cream or whipped cream.

29. (new) A method of treating or preventing dental caries, dental plaque, and periodontal infection in a humans or animals comprising administering to the oral cavity of a human or animal one or more lactic bacteria that are one or more of the strains CNCM I-1984, CNCM I-1985, CNCM I-1986, CNCM I-1987, or LMG P-18997.

